

REMARKS

Claims 17-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-16 are cancelled, and claim 19 is amended. Further, Fig. 2 is corrected by the attached replacement drawing sheet. Reconsideration based on the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Office Action indicates that claims 17-20 include allowable subject matter.

I. The Specification Satisfies All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the specification because of informalities. The specification is amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

II. The Claims Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to claims 5, 12 and 19 because of informalities. Claims 5 and 12 are cancelled. Thus, the rejection with respect to claims 5 and 12 is moot. However, claim 19 is amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to claim 19 is respectfully requested.

III. The Claims Satisfy the Requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 8, 11-13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claims 8, 11-13 and 15 are cancelled. Thus, this rejection is moot.

IV. The Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 9 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as unpatentable over JP 2000-012465 A (hereinafter "JP '465"); claims 3 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over JP '465 in view of W0 00/59044 A1 Furusawa et al.; claims 7 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over JP '465 in view of WO 00/059015 A1 to Shimoda et al.; claims 8 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over JP '465 in view

of EP 0 823 491 A2; claims 4 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over JP '465 in view of either applicant's admitted prior art or U.S. Patent No. 6,235,605 to Ping, and further in view of WO 97/07429 A1 to Clem et al; and claims 5, 6, 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C.

§103(a) as unpatentable over JP 465 in view of either applicant's admitted prior art or Ping, further in view of Clem, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,379,448 to Sirejacob.

Claims 1-16 are cancelled. Thus, this rejection is moot.

V. The Drawings Satisfy All Formal Requirements


The Office Action objects to the drawings. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that reference characters ST1, ST2, and ST3 have been used to designate both sub-figures in Figure 1 and three different sub-figures in Figure 2. Figure 2 is corrected as indicated in the attached replacement drawing sheet. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 17-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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JAO:JLC/cmf

Attachment:
Replacement Sheet (Fig. 2)

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